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From the Chargé D’Affaires Desk | [A Bi-Monthly Update from the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon](#)

MESSAGE FROM CHARGE D’AFFAIRES JOHN OLSON

IN THIS ISSUE

Happy New Year to all our readers!

As we begin 2014, we hope you will join us to reflect on an eventful year gone by and the opportunities that lie ahead this year for both of our countries. When Embassy staff was not enjoying time spent with our families this holiday season, we were hard at work on a number of exciting programs and official visits throughout Portugal. In this newsletter edition, we will highlight the successes of these activities as well as, more globally, the Iranian nuclear program deal.

January 12th marked the beginning of the historic multinational accord to monitor and reduce Iran’s nuclear production program. Secretary Kerry noted that this temporary agreement allows international weapons inspectors to access Iranian production facilities in exchange for decreased sanctions on Iranian oil sales – an understanding that benefits all countries involved and greatly strengthens the international nuclear nonproliferation mechanism.

During the last two months, we have hosted a number of very interesting visitors. In early December we were honored to welcome Christina Tomlinson, the State Department’s Public Diplomacy Director for Europe, for a tour of Portugal. While in Portugal, she was able to tour several of our American Corners, speak with students, see the trailblazing Digital Innovation Center at the American Corner at FCT-NOVA and hand out prizes to the winners of the first regional Spelling Bee in the city of Aveiro. In December, the American Corner in Aveiro also welcomed social media specialist and Luso-American Luís Filipe Dias for an informative workshop on multimedia production techniques. Most recently, U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew paid a short visit to Lisbon to meet with his counterpart and the country’s leadership. During his time here, Secretary Lew welcomed strong U.S.-Portuguese ties and commended Portugal for its progress in putting the country back on the path to economic recovery.

Coming up in February, the Embassy is excited to support the last in a series of professional development workshops for alumni of USG-funded exchange programs focusing on leadership; a fitting theme for our exchange programs, in which 10 former Portuguese Prime Ministers and Presidents have participated since the 1960s. As always, we encourage you to visit several of the exhibitions that are both ongoing and upcoming – and if you are a parent of a 9th or 10th grader at a public school in the school district of Setubal, we hope your child’s school will be sending a team to compete in our Margem Sul Spelling Bee.



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FIRST STEP AGREEMENT ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

On January 12th, Iran and the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and the United Kingdom worked out the final details of the Joint Plan of Action announced in November 2013, designed to contain Iran's nuclear program. The international community has been involved in discussions with Iran about its nuclear program since 2006. A turning point came in late November 2013, when negotiators emerged from a Geneva meeting with some initial understandings on how to halt the progress of Iran's nuclear program. The finalized agreement requires Iran to take specific actions to roll back key parts of its nuclear program and halt further progress. In return, over the next six months the United States and its partners will ease U.N.-imposed sanctions against Iranian oil sales, offering the opportunity for economic relief.

Secretary Kerry has noted that the agreement protects the security interests of the United States by providing unprecedented monitoring and inspections of Iran's nuclear program. International weapons inspectors will have access to Iranian nuclear facilities to which they have had very limited or no access in the past. The deal calls for inspection opportunities at the Fordow, Natanz and Arak facilities. The agreement is an initial understanding with a six-month expiration, at which point re-evaluation will occur. President Obama called this agreement an important step forward in pursuing a comprehensive and durable resolution.



Secretary Kerry meeting about Nuclear Program

SECRETARY OF TREASURY VISIT TO PORTUGAL



Jacob Lew with Prime-Minister Pedro Passos Coelho



... with Vice-Prime-Minister Paulo Portas

During his stay, Secretary Lew met with Finance Minister Maria Albuquerque, Prime Minister Passos Coelho, and Deputy Prime Minister Paulo Portas to discuss the country's plans for returning to the markets and to offer encouragement as Portugal continues to work towards sustainable growth and prosperity for future generations. He noted that Portugal had already made remarkable progress through difficult economic reforms and that growth and exports were indicators of recovery. Minister Albuquerque noted the excellent bilateral relations shared by the U.S. and Portugal and added that it was particularly important as Portugal completes its adjustment program.



*... with the Minister of Finance
Maria Luísa Albuquerque*

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE EMBASSY

LUÍS FILIPE DIAS (SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER) PROGRAM

Luís Filipe Dias, a social media and multimedia production expert, talked about how to leverage social media to reach out to diverse audiences during several workshops presented between December 16-20 at the American Corners in Lisbon at NOVA University's Faculty of Science and Technology (AC@FCT-NOVA) and the Superior Technical Institute (AC@IST-UTL), as well as at the American Corner at the University of Aveiro (AC@Aveiro) and the American Corner at the University of Porto.



Luis Filipe Dias at FCT-NOVA

VISIT OF CRISTINA TOMLINSON

The Embassy was honored to have Christina Tomlinson in December, the State Department's Public Diplomacy Director for Europe, who was visiting Portugal as part of a tour of several U.S. Embassies in Europe.

On December 12, Ms. Tomlinson visited AC@FCT-NOVA and met with the faculty members and library administration. During her visit, she was given a tour of the Corner's Digital Innovation Center--the first Corner worldwide to have a digital lab--and was invited to inaugurate the Corner-sponsored art exhibit by the American glass artist, Dr. Robert Wiley. Ms. Tomlinson also gave a talk to the university community about economic partnerships between the U.S. and Portugal and the State Department's support for research in science and technology.

On December 13, Ms. Tomlinson visited AC@Aveiro for a tour and on the same day presented the awards to the winners of the Spelling Bee Aveiro.



Christina Tomlinson's visit to American Corners

ALUMNI WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP & COACHING

On February 22, a full-day workshop on leadership and coaching will be held at the AC@IST-UTL in Lisbon. This workshop, the last one of our professional development workshop series presented throughout Portugal for the alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, will be followed up by a separate workshop on grants, coming ahead of the annual Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund competition. If you are an alum of an exchange program and are interested in participating in the February 22 workshop, please respond to alumniportugal@state.gov to receive a registration packet. The registration deadline is February 7. Space at the workshop is limited, so please let us know of your interest as soon as possible.



REGIONAL SPELLING BEES IN AVEIRO AND MARGEM SUL

The U.S. Embassy partnered with AC@Aveiro, the Portuguese Association of English Teachers, local alumni and local schools in the region of Aveiro to host an English Spelling Bee for approximately 135 ninth and tenth grade students. The three winning students were awarded prizes by the Embassy and visiting European Public Diplomacy Director, Christina Tomlinson. This event, which featured a volunteer team made up of Portuguese and American teachers, young alumni, university staff, Embassy staff, as well as both high school and university students, brought a fun and popular English-language competition to central Portugal and helped to foster leadership and volunteerism among our young volunteers. The next planned regional spelling bee is for the school district of Setubal, also encompassing all of the southern suburbs of Lisbon, which will be held at the AC@FCT-NOVA in Caparica on February 20. If you are a secondary school teacher or a 9th/10th grader at a public school in the Setubal district and are interested in participating, please contact us at spellingbeeportugal@state.gov



Christina Tomlinson with the volunteer team for Spelling Bee Aveiro

UPCOMING EVENTS/IMPORTANT DATES

- **President's Day – February 17**
(U.S. Embassy is closed)
- **Meals in Space exhibition – through March 1**
Francisco Sa Carneiro Airport, Porto (Arrivals area)
- **EducationUSA session on Higher Education Opportunities in the USA – February 7@1000**
FCSH, NOVA University, Av. de Berna, Lisbon
- **Rock concert with the band Touch 'N' Go, at the train stations of Cais do Sodre, Rossio and Sete Rios**
10 Fevereiro@1300 e as 1700 (Cais do Sodré)
11 Fevereiro@1300 e as 1700 (Rossio)
12 Fevereiro@1300 e as 1700 (Sete Rios)
- **Former Microsoft Portugal CEO João Girbal speaks at JorTec – February 12@1530**
American Corner, FCT (Grande Auditório), NOVA University, Caparica Campus
- **CV writing workshop and EducationUSA session – February 18@(TBC)**
American Corner, FLUL, University of Lisbon, Cidade Universitária
- **Margem Sul Regional Spelling Bee (Setubal District) – February 20 @0930**
American Corner, FCT (Grande Auditório), NOVA University, Caparica Campus
- **Alumni Workshop on Leadership & Coaching -- February 22 @0930**
American Corner, Superior Technical Institute (IST), Alameda Campus, Lisbon
- **EducationUSA session on Higher Education Opportunities in the USA – February 24@1500**
American Corner, Superior Technical Institute (IST), Alameda Campus, Lisbon
- **EducationUSA session on Higher Education Opportunities in the USA – March 10@1430**
American Corner, University of Aveiro
- **EducationUSA U.S. University and College Fair – March 19@1600**
Instituto Camões, Avenida de Liberdade 270, Lisbon